Madison Infoshop

c/o Social Justice Center
1202 Williamson St.
Madison, WI 53703
madisoninfoshop@gmail.com
www.madinfoshop.wordpress.com

Printed on recycled paper

Cheese Head Wisconsin!

H'STORICAL ADVENTURES FROM THE BADGER STATE

Volume #2
Aug. '11

UW Students Deliver Valentines to Walker

February 14, 2011 For Immediate Release

On February 14, more than 1000 members of the UW community and their supporters converged on the Capitol, filling the Rotunda and surrounding wings, to deliver valentines to Governor Walker in an effort to halt UW budget cuts.

The Valentine's Day cards, signed by people all across Wisconsin, called upon Governor Walker not to cut UW funding in his budget proposal, reading: "We Heart UW : Governor Walker, Don't Break My Heart." They came in the midst of a larger effort by unionized state workers to protect their collective bargaining rights and the vitality of their unions.

The gathered community members chanted, "Spread the love, stop the hate; don't let Walker legislate," voicing their united concern for the University of Wisconsin, public education in general, and public service workers.

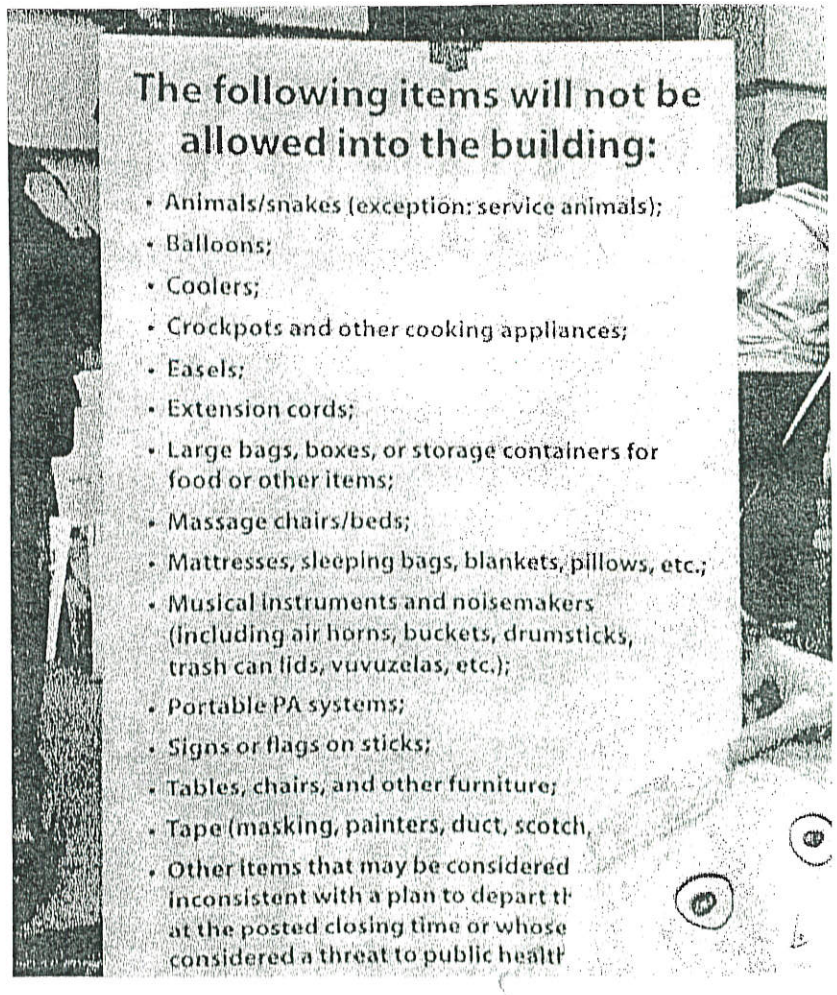
Beth Harper of Madison, librarian at the UW said, "This budget bill is not about money; it's about breaking unions' backs, and it's about breaking the university's backs. I'm really glad to see students and university workers out here together."

Rachel Willson-Broyles of Fall Creek added, "I love Wisconsin, I love going to grad school here, and I love having an affordable education… This is not the way to cut the budget." Gov. Walker declined to meet with the students.

WALKER CUTS EDUCATION BUDGET

I ♥ UW

Governor Walker, don't break my ♥


The following items will not be allowed into the building:
• Animals/snakes (exception: service animals);
• Balloons;
• Coolers;
• Crockpots and other cooking appliances;
• Easels;
• Extension cords;
• Large bags, boxes, or storage containers for food or other items;
• Massage chairs/beds;
• Mattresses, sleeping bags, blankets, pillows, etc.;
• Musical instruments and noisemakers (including air horns, buckets, drumsticks, trash can lids, vuvuzelas, etc.);
• Portable PA systems;
• Signs or flags on sticks;
• Tables, chairs, and other furniture;
• Tape (masking, painters, duct, scotch,
• Other items that may be considered inconsistent with a plan to depart th at the posted closing time or whose considered a threat to public healt

What if the whole world was like this, every day?

Free food. A free place to stay and sleep for everyone. No bosses, landlords, judges, or jails. Real community. Action for social justice. Direct democracy. Consent. Autonomy. Mutual aid, helping without asking for anything in return.

Inevitably, the time will come when we will have to leave this space. But if that wasn't so, would you ever leave?

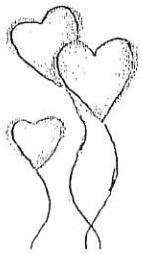
We are living in a vision of a world that could be. Will we quietly go back to our isolated lives and wage labor? Or will we create the world we want to live in?

FOR A FREE WORLD
FOR ANARCHY!

Flyer from Capital Occupation

Thursday, 7.28

Capitol Police arrest Ronald J. Blair, 5 for allegedly popping a protestor's red heart-shaped balloon in the Capitol on Monday. Blair, who is assistant director of the Division of State Facilities, is tentatively charged with endangering safety by use of a dangerous weapon and put on paid leave. Blair appears to have accidentally cut himself in the incident, spilling blood on the Capitol floor. Whatever it takes to stop the balloons.



prenatal BadgerCare for undocumented pregnant women, endangering mother and child. In addition, the budget itself would eliminate access to FoodShare for legal immigrant adults who have lived in the U.S. for less than 5 years, and would eliminate in-state tuition for undocumented immigrant students in Wisconsin technical colleges and universities. These, while some of the most immediate threats facing people of color, undocumented people, and low-income individuals, are only principal issues on a much farther reaching assault on the basic rights of Wisconsin people.

The use of "fiscal responsibility" as a scapegoat to limit the rights of people did not, by any means, start with Walker's bill. This country is founded on the bloodshed of the indigenous people of this land, African people, indentured white servants, Chinese immigrants and immigrants from around the world. Racism and injustice are old issues that need deep medicine to heal, and people of color again and again dress the wounds only to have the bandages torn open again. The patience demonstrated by people of color while navigating the capitol occupation, as a widely single-issue struggle for collective bargaining, was a testament those individuals' and groups' commitment to collaboration and mutual support. So, as the focus shifts from collective bargaining to issues of health care and public services, many are left to wonder: does "solidarity forever" have an expiration date? Are white working people ready to stand with people of color and low income people of the state? Like the quest for true healing, first understand what has brought this state of dis-ease. It was not a quick process and the fixes will not be quick, however there must be some hope to use our current position to build for liberation. To build for the long haul, challenge racism, and work toward collective liberation....

Groundwork is a white anti-racist collective working to dismantle white supremacy and achieve racial justice in our communities. We are committed to doing work against racism in our daily lives from the heart, with dignity, integrity, and radical honesty. Groundwork works to support one another through self-education, reflection, and sharing our experiences of working against racism in our daily lives, organize for Racial Justice by creating and sustaining accountable relationships with groups that prioritize racial justice and are led by people of color, and work with other white people to dismantle white supremacy and all systems of oppression within our circles of influence, particularly within

PEOPLE'S RIGHTS

- A **just taxation** system in which corporations and the wealthy pay their fair share
- Living wage **jobs** & **fair** farm prices
- The right to **collectively organize** and bargain
- Quality, affordable public **education** in the public domain
- Quality and affordable **healthcare**
- Protection of our **environment**
- Access to healthy **food** and quality **housing**
- A secure **retirement**
- Strengthened human, **civil** and immigrant **rights**

FOR ALL

 CapTimes 4/6-12/11

You've got mail

Is the GOP probe of a professor's emails a fact of life or a blow to academic freedom?

By TODD FINKELMEYER » The Capital Times » tfinkelmeyer@madison.com

University of Wisconsin Regent Tom Loftus wants his colleagues to reaffirm their commitment to "sifting and winnowing" in the wake of the GOP probe of professor William Cronon's emails: Madison360, Page 5

William Cronon still is struggling to make sense of the past few weeks.

"I feel like I went down a rabbit hole and I'm in Wonderland, or just a really strange world," says the University of Wisconsin-Madison professor.

In the span of 10 days last month, Cronon started a blog, penned an op-ed for the New York Times and let the world know his emails were the target of an open records request from the Republican Party of Wisconsin, a move roundly criticized as an attempt to intimidate a professor for offering his perspective on political issues. Media outlets from across the country followed the story, with commentators, bloggers and readers debating everything from academic freedom to political pettiness.

"On several days of the past two weeks, my email inbox has pinged literally every 15 seconds with new mail," says Cronon, UW-Madison's Frederick Jackson Turner and Vilas research professor of history, geography and environmental studies. "There are hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people writing to me. I can't keep up. It feels like I'm not in my real life."

Wisconsin Wave

WE WON'T PAY FOR THEIR CRISIS:

Picket & Rally Against the Corporate Lobbyists

What:

Picket and Rally outside the state conference of Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC)

Where:

Outside their conference at the Monona Terrace entrance (intersection of Wilson and Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.)

When:

Wednesday, February 23rd

Picket from Noon to 1:00pm

Rally at 4:30pm

Who is responsible for Scott Walker's attacks on public education, public services, public sector workers, and the right to vote? His corporate backers, Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC). Join us the day after Walker's proposed 2011-13 budget is announced in the growing

Cross-Racial Solidarity and the Budget Bill

By: http://groundworkmadison.wordpress.com/

The weeks of action surrounding Walker's budget evoked a level of collaboration and visibility that shattered previous expectations for the organizing power of the working people of Wisconsin. Promises of "solidarity forever" fostered collaboration that breached the chasm between the working and middle class and sparked cross-party collaborative efforts. Cross-racial solidarity and solidarity with low-income communities were, however, widely overlooked by the predominantly white population around the capitol.

The resilience shown by groups such as Freedom Inc, MEChA, Voces de la Frontera, along with countless people of color has been outstanding and needs to be recognized while the histories of the capitol occupation are still being written. These groups and communities have been at the forefront of creating democratic spaces within this struggle and were able to claim visibility within the capitol, media, and community despite many primarily white organizations' "strategic" decision to focus on collective bargaining and steer conversation away from Medicaid/Badgercare, foodstamps, and the attack being launched on the rights of undocumented workers.

The protests around the capitol have left us with outstanding new networks, collaborative energy, and opportunities for coalition building. Although much the momentum behind protecting collective bargaining right has been derailed, many of the bill's threats against working people in Wisconsin still need to be contended. Right now in Wisconsin, we have an opportunity to build relationships, make connections, join forces, and work to make real change. It is imperative, while recognizing how this budget will affect the middle class, to ask who will be most affected by these changes? Who takes the brunt of budget cuts? How will this bill affect the immigrant community, people of color, unemployed, underemployed and homeless people? People of Color and the Struggling class will be hit the hardest: As a result of the restructuring of Medicaid programs in the budget repair bill, about 55,000 people could immediately lose their health insurance under the state's BadgerCare program. This same restructuring of Medicaid could result in denial of BadgerCare for legal immigrants, and

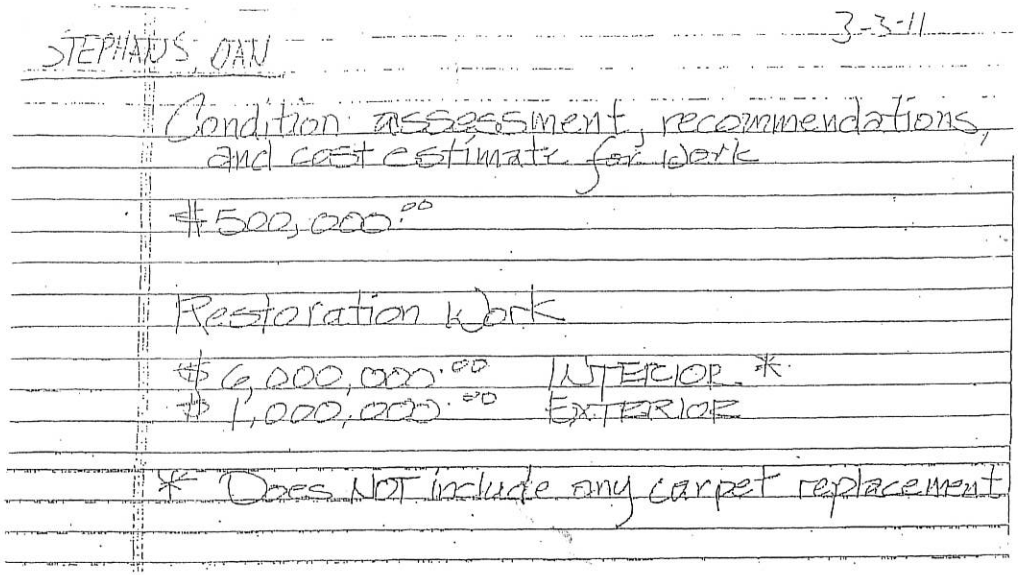
Capitol damage cost claim based on 1 page of notebook paper

Handwritten page was all state had behind $7 million figure

By Jason Stein of the Journal Sentinel March 30, 2011

Madison — State officials' controversial courtroom testimony that protesters did more than $7 million in damage to the Capitol was based on a single handwritten page.

An open records request by the Journal Sentinel on the damage estimate turned up only one page of notebook paper listing costs written before the courtroom testimony. Other e-mails from state officials listing areas to check for potential damage also were released, but there were no others with any dollar figures written before the court testimony.



3-3-11

STEPHANIS, DAN

Condition assessment, recommendations, and cost estimate for work

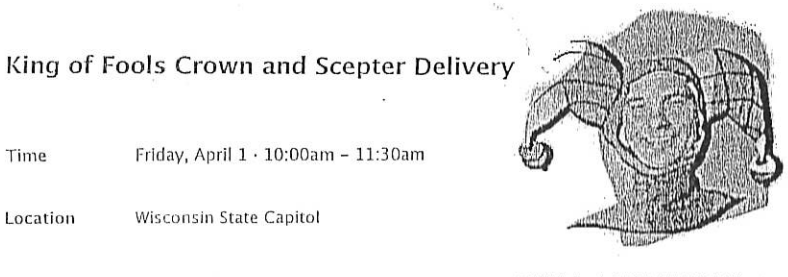
$500,000.00

Restoration work

$6,000,000.00 INTERIOR *

$1,000,000.00 EXTERIOR

* Does NOT include any carpet replacement



King of Fools Crown and Scepter Delivery

Time Friday, April 1 · 10:00am – 11:30am

Location Wisconsin State Capitol

72 Attending See All

More Info On Friday, April 1 a delegation from Fools & Clowns, Local 1, will deliver crown and scepter to Governor Scott Walker and read out the formal proclamation declaring him King of the Fools. The proclamation reads in part: "In the greatest fool tradition, he has willingly brought scorn and ridicule down upon himself. His comments and actions are so outrageou

Farmer Labor Solidarity Tractorcade 3/12/11

Speech by Tony Schultz, CSA farmer, Athens, WI

My name is Tony Schultz and I'm a third generation family farmer. Born and raised on a 50 cow dairy in Athens, Wisconsin My Partner Kat Becker and I now run the family farm as a 150 member CSA with Maple syrup , Beefers, pigs and chickens. I came back to the family farm after college because of my values; values that I believe to be the true values of this state. The Red Barn on or license plate symbolize values of family farms which to me are essentially the values of the labor movement. Family farms like unions value the dignity of having some control over your life and your work; to feel empowered by your work not alienated by it. Family Farmers like unions value the means to afford a beautiful and constructive setting to raise a family. Family Farms like unions value economic democracy. What is a union anyway, but working people coming together to improve their lives, and that is what we are here to do today, to come together with labor to express these values and take our state forward together.

Solidarity between farmers and workers is an old and sacred alliance of producers that dates back to the Populist Movement and beyond when farmers and workers got together to fight for things such as a progressive income tax, a financial system that served the people, and the formation of unions and the eight hour day. It was over 120 years ago the famous Georgia populist Tom Watson stated words that could not be truer and have brought us together today: "The fruits of the toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up the fortunes for a few unprecedented in human history." The great Minnesota Populist Ignatius Donnelly proclaimed: "The interests of rural and urban labor are the same. Their enemies are identical." For more than 100 years we've been fighting together. We've been on the picket line, sitting in, dumping milk, on strike, blocking traffic, fighting and dying together! We fought our way out of one guilded age and we'll do it again!

And yet there are those who tell us this isn't a farmers' issue. Those whose petty resentment is amplified by right-wing radio until a skewed moral analysis has them thinking a fireman's pension is the root of the problem. And while I won't give up on my neighbors, there are those who explicitly represent this evil, such as the Dairy Business Association who claim the legacy of Wisconsin's farming heritage while pursuing policies that drive the family farm into extinction. They were here on Wednesday at "Ag day at the capitol" saying hooray for Walker's budget. Let me draw back the curtain and tell you those aren't farmers. They're agribusiness corporations with a few factory farmers in front and I want Wisconsin and the world to know that this is the real Ag day at the Capitol and this is a farmer's issue.

It's a farmer issue because Rural schools are the centers of our small communities and they are being decimated by this budget. In our farm town of Athens 14 of 44 staff are losing their jobs. This is bad for our children's education, It is bad for the stability of our town, puts the very future of our school district in jeopardy, and we say no!!

It's a farmer's issue because Badgercare is being hacked. More than 11,000 family farm members depend on this program because of the exclusivity of for profit health insurance and the volatile and pathetic price we receive for milk and other corporate controlled commodities. We depend on this program and we support Badgercare!

It's a farmer's issue because family farmers have been battling corporate power for more than a century as it's concentrated markets, leveraging a price below the cost of production, and directed federal and state policies to say "get big or get out." Walker's budget and union busting bill could not be a clearer give away to corporate power and to that we say no!! In the age old struggle between the haves and the have-nots we know what side we're on.

It's a farmer's issue because Public sector workers are our friends, and neighbors, and family members and We stand in solidarity with them !!

It a farmer's issue because we understand we are all in this together. We go up together or we go down together. We have two choices, unions can be busted and I can be pit against my neighbor in a desperate and unequal and dominated economy, or we can come together to say this is what our families need, this is what our communities need, this is what a living wage looks like and this is what a democracy looks like! It's a farmers' issue because we understand that an injury to one is an injury to all! Solidarity!

Over 50 tractors and an estimated 150,000 people attended the rally on March 12th in Madison – the largest ever in Wisconsin history. You can watch Tony's powerful speech, as well as the tractorcade on YouTube.

communities, the unemployed, and youth from all classes. A first step towards a movement that attracts and keeps *all* constituencies will demand systemic change on the state, national, and world levels:

1. A visionary safety net founded on a universal basic income for all, rich and poor alike, young and old, employed and unemployed.
2. True immigrant justice, i.e. full amnesty for undocumented adults and citizenship for undocumented youth.
3. Full democratic rights for the incarcerated, and an end to the Drug War. Voting eligibility cannot be stripped.
4. The end of corporate tax giveaways and the privatization programs that have destroyed the public sector.
5. Increased public funding for public education, public health care, public transportation, and the arts.
6. Environmental sustainability and water conservation as the foundation for urban and rural planning. Shift towards renewable energy and food justice.
7. A real end to the unnecessary, wasteful, and brutal multi-trillion-dollar wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, drastically reduced military spending, and funding full care for our veterans.
8. The ousting of Gov. Walker and his administration, either through resignation or recall.

*

We all know that the budget repair bill is only the beginning of a calculated attack on the middle and lower class. In preparation, we would do well to revisit the movements and campaigns from both the recent and distant past that mixed lobbying, protest, and media work with strikes, occupations, and civil disobedience. These include struggles like the 2008 Republic Windows and Doors factory and the 2010 Whittier Elementary School field house occupations in Chicago, and the Ojibwe fishing rights movement and the campaign that killed the proposed Crandon Mine, both from Wisconsin in the 1990s. Any number of past struggles, such as the Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike of 1968, or the San Francisco General Strike in 1934, or the Flint Sit-Down Strike in 1936-37, still inspire and instruct. As we move forward we need to examine why overly cautious labor leaders and unimaginative Democrats took the reins of a movement that held such promise, and how we let them. In closing, we urge our fellow citizens and activists in the grassroots to reserve our power separately from the "leadership" and prepare for the next uprising, the one that will erupt in a day, a week, a month, or years down the road—the one in which we do not let the opportunity slip away.

WISCONSIN

CLOSED

for business as usual

WALKER'S BUDGET MAKES BAD CHOICES, NOT HARD CHOICES—by taking from schools, seniors, healthcare, public services, and the poor—by giving corporations and his wealthy donor's huge tax giveaways. According to the Legislative Fiscal Bureau, Walker's union busting measures to strip public sector workers of their collective bargaining rights will not close the budget gap. The executive's budget takes Wisconsin *backwards* . . . we say *Forward!*

On April 5 more than 1.5 million Wisconsin voters went to the polls and elected Kloppenburg by a mere 204 votes, or so it seemed. A day later 14,300 previously uncounted votes suddenly appeared in Waukesha County under suspicious circumstances involving Waukesha County Clerk Kathy Nickolaus, a former employee of Prosser. She reported enough missing votes to place the results just barely past the percentage needed to trigger a state-financed recount. Amid the calls for investigation from liberal groups, the lesson in electoral strategy from Gore v Bush 2000 and the '08 Obama campaigns was totally lost, ie close results will always be vulnerable to right wing electoral theft, and that therefore, an electoral victory *must* be beyond doubt. That means mobilizing a massive coalition on the left, including the traditionally under-polled groups of African American and youth voters. At the time of this writing it does appear that Kloppenburg may have lost fairly, yet what is arguably worse than her defeat is a movement that hedges its bets solely on the polls as the way to defeat one of the most extreme and well-coordinated right wing attacks on working people in modern history, and even then, fails to implement a known winning electoral strategy.

On a larger level, let's imagine, what would have transpired had citizens occupied the senate assembly chambers instead of just the rotunda, especially on the day of the assembly vote? What would have happened had Walker ordered the National Guard (as he threatened to do from the beginning) to quell protests and strikes and the Guard refused? The fact is nobody knows, and that is precisely the point. Once the movement energy and hopes are re-channeled into electoral efforts nearly exclusively, the outcome—no matter who wins, really—is already predetermined and circumscribed by the structure of conventional politics, a structure that favors wealth and has allowed ever increasing inequality to become the norm.

*

We have now reached the fourth or fifth act of the Wisconsin Uprising. The fundamental contradictions that have shaped the sequence of events—including the key failures of the left that have helped Walker achieve his present position of strength—cannot be resolved without a strategic reorientation. Above all, we need to be *courageously visionary*.

As with any historical advance toward an egalitarian society, our achievements will take time, energy, and commitment for the long haul! But we already knew that. What we've been reminded of in Wisconsin over the last two months, is that once started, following through on the chain of escalations gives us a better chance of winning specific battles and puts our opposition on the defensive, as long as we have the courage, vision, and creativity to increase the pressure when the opportunities present. Strategically speaking, the events in the chain of escalation itself are what generate the spaces of new socialities, the beginnings of the democracy we want, and the ground on which new leaders and new ideas emerge from the grassroots.

Now that the chain has been broken and the conservatives have prevailed for the moment, the question is how to restart a series of meaningfully oppositional actions. Furthermore, let us always remember how these such actions can communicate solidarities across sectors and constituencies beyond the union-dominated constitution of the movement, as did the near-spontaneous actions of the first week. In other words, if this movement is to be sustained, it can no longer be exclusively or even primarily about unions, collective bargaining, or the GOP's greed and lies, as egregious as they are. In order to win, we need to imagine and articulate the *society that we want to live in*, not simply fight defensively against the latest round of GOP/corporate attacks. The Wisconsin Uprising must evolve into a movement that speaks to the priorities of immigrants and the inner-city poor, the unorganized private sector workers, the unemployed, and the incarcerated, as loudly as it speaks to the concerns of the unionized. We need to ask what it would take to make this movement truly popular. *We have the power of numbers* but we remain separated by walls of division. The white progressive voices in a relatively privileged place like Madison have a responsibility to use their privilege and power creatively and generously. The Wisconsin Uprising will gain strength by moving towards a long-term coalition of urban and rural constituencies, one that activates and embraces leadership from the peoples who have been hardest hit by the economic crisis—rural farm communities, Native communities, African-American communities, Hispanic

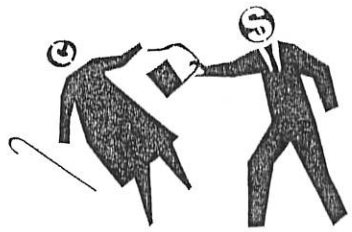
Crisis isn't simply what happens to us. We aren't victims with no agency who desire a return to a capitalism that works. We understand that capitalism is working. This is what it does. But what do we do? How do we escape order of established politics and protest and enter into resistance? How do we render the world which alienates us inoperative and become a force capable of being the contradiction that tears it apart? How shall we become the crisis?

We propose: Choose to be partisans in this war which has already started. Block the economy, strike, occupy, and sabotage.

We respond to Scott Walker, his policies, and what he represents, but we must become a force that makes all positions of power obsolete. It will then no longer matter what politicians think or do. It will only matter what we do.

* Flyer from State Capitol Occupation

Solidarity
Sing-along



Reverse Robbin Hood shuts down M&I and Chase banks and the State Senate to protest the Walker budget against working families!

May 11, 2011 www.whatdemocracylookslike.com

Governor Walker's Reverse Robbin' Hood budget steals from the poor to give to the rich. His corporate puppet-masters dictate policy while refusing to pay their fair share.

So protesters took to the streets around the Capitol today, in costumer as Reverse Robbin' Hood and his band of Merry Men, visiting banks that have donated generously to candidates that support an anti-worker agenda, and ending their action with a visit to the Capitol itself. Before they were done, M&I Bank and Chase Bank chose to lock their doors rather than answer protesters questions about their policies, and finally protesters chants of "Tax the rich!" and "Shame!" forced the Wisconsin Senate into an unscheduled recess.

Lowly Worker/Peasant/Taxpayer/Subject
Dilapidated Hovel Lane
Madison, WI 53715
Date: 5/11/11
Pay to the Order of: M&I CEO Mark Furlong
My pocket is now empty, but here is my very last ..... ONE CENT
Under Order From: Reverse Robin Hood

Marshall & Illsley (M&I) Bank Declaration:

Here ye, hear ye! At M&I bank we truly appreciate our peasant customers - especially those foolish taxpayers who paid for our whopping $1.7 billion bailout in 2008 under TARP. Instead of repaying the money, our royal executives and obedient employees gave $54,000 in political contributions to Reverse Robbin' Hood Walker and...and it's working out quite nicely for us as he enacts a budget that steals from Wisconsin's students, seniors, workers and the poor - to provide us tax giveaways and lines the pockets of our royal executives (we haven't paid WI taxes since 2007!). Instead of paying our fair share, we will pay our failed executives $71 million in bonuses this year. Our recent $4.1 billion buyout by the Bank of Montreal may cost us our Milwaukee headquarters, but - hey - who cares if the executives all get golden parachutes. While everyone else should be pulling themselves up by their boot straps and sharing in the sacrifice in these troubled times, M&I intends to remain above the fray. Deposit that last penny in your pocket with M&I and we can have your cake and eat it, too!

CEO: Mark Furlong (2010 compensation - $5 million)

Assets: $49.6 billion Taxpayer Bailout Bill (unpaid): $1.7 billion WI Taxes Paid since '07: $0

Join us & make corporations pay their fair share: **www.PeoplesRightsCampaign.org**

3. March 9 and 10 stand as the dates that a strike would have made most sense but did not happen; the fact is, the strategy of escalation was abandoned when it most mattered. Walker's strategy of waiting out the movement had failed; after two and a half weeks of senate stalemate and daily demonstrations, it was clear that the movement wasn't going anywhere. Rather than compromise, and being worried about cracks in Republican lawmaker unity, he and senate majority leader Fitzgerald rammed through his union-busting bill on the evening of March 9. This was accomplished by splitting "fiscal" from "non-fiscal" issues from the bill, circumventing the 14 Democrats who had blocked quorum, and by advancing a hastily called vote in a deceitful move of still unsettled legality.

In other words, on March 9, rather than back down Walker raised the ante yet again, and to a level for which there could only have been one kind of escalation in response: a strike across sectors and occupations. Talk of a general strike, both fanciful and serious, existed during the first three weeks of the struggle. It was visible in flyers and signs, the conversations happening around the square, and most particularly from the IWW and the South Central Federation of Labor (a Wisconsin federation of nearly one hundred labor organizations representing 45,000 workers.) By February 21, the beginning of the second week, the SCFL had endorsed a one-day general strike but did not have the authority to call one. From the point of view of the raging non-unionized grassroots, and much of the rank and file, a one-day strike should have been called on the day that Walker signed the anti-union bill at the very least. The hot potato then would have been thrown back in Walker's hands, confronting him with the queasiness of having to carry out his stated threats to fire public workers. But it did not happen. The union leadership responded with words, not actions, thereby severing the chain of escalations, and *accepted a defeat*. By this time the movement had for all practical purposes become identified, including from within, as union-led, leaving the non-union grassroots with nowhere to channel their outrage, energy, and willingness to share risk. A precious historic opportunity was lost.

Here the lessons for the grassroots are at least two. First, that union leadership is, like the Democrats, wedded to a narrow and ultimately conservative set of interests. Their primary considerations include the short-term job security of their members, the viability of their organizations apart from the greater public good, and, above all, the easiest ways to ensure the flow of member dues, above all. Secondly, and at a deeper level, that both trade and labor unions are in essence defensive formations, there to protect a standard of living often originally won under comparatively favorable labor market conditions. Moving into uncharted political territory, much less contributing to the movement a visionary element, is not the natural tendency of the modern union. Even more so for a labor movement that has been steadily declining since Reagan fired the air-traffic controllers in 1981, and before that, the Taft-Hartley Act (1947) curtailed the legality of strikes, making massive concessions under the smokescreen of collective bargaining the standard course of action for organized labor. Yet, 2011 has witnessed Republican governors attack even this last recourse—collective bargaining—across the Midwest. Win now and defeat the GOP's onslaught against the last stronghold of middle class economic security, and all things public. Or lose and send the demoralizing message to the nation and the world that hundreds of thousands of protestors, a two-week occupation of the Capital, and public opinion on the side of labor still could not produce a victory in Wisconsin. In times like this, when public unions are fighting for their very existence, and a panoply of constituencies face serious threat, all tactics are needed to win, including strikes and direct action. No action can be ruled out.

4. Even before the March 9/10 episode, the April 5 election for Wisconsin Supreme Court was recognized widely as a statewide referendum on Scott Walker, given incumbent justice David Prosser's avowed support for the Walker agenda. After the non-response of March 9/10, the election was left as the next opportunity for the movement to land a substantive blow against Walker in the foreseeable future. Furthermore, the dispersion of the weeks-long movement into a myriad of fronts (recalls, boycotts, etc) made the April 5 election that much more important as a way to refocus the movement on a single, shared, unifying goal, a way to recapture the power of mass mobilization.

The collectively hailed movement changed participants, especially through the occupation, which over those days became one of the most intensely moving political social spaces seen or experienced outside of Tahrir Square. The newly uninhibited desire to communicate—expressed in countless clever and entertaining protest signs and performances—combined with the shared sense that Walker's assault targeted whole groups, helped to create novel socialities in which political expression and shared feeling with strangers became a new norm. The new socialities, the rising class consciousness, the unleashed creativity in expression, the immanent power of self-organized action, and the snowballing impacts of tactical escalation—all products of the earliest stage—remain the most vital achievements of the movement, and bode well for the months and years of struggle ahead.

2. On the morning of the first Thursday (February 17) the rumor and then the confirmed news of the 14 senate Democrats fleeing to Illinois sent waves of excitement through the occupied Capital and the throngs on the square. It was exactly the action we needed and fit the string of escalations over those early days perfectly. The flight of the 14 and consequent denial of a quorum took control away from the Republicans. It was an act of aggression, a true counterattack that served as an *escalation*. Every escalation risks a loss of support, a desertion of the nervous, the unsure, and the moderate. But in each of the earlier escalations—the walk-outs, sick-outs, the occupation, etc—resolve stiffened and excitement grew massively. Thus, in escalating the standoff in that moment, the 14 joined the movement and pushed it along. In exercising a comparatively direct power over the Republicans, we don't mind saying that the 14 took the momentary lead in the movement. They saw the opportunity, made their move, reaped positive attention, and put Walker and Fitzgerald on the defensive, making them worry about desertions from those wavering on the Republican side.

But precisely because the 14 are elected officials, the move opened up a whole front of legalisitic minutiae, opaque and inaccessible to the vast majority of the citizenry. At the same time, as a media storyline, the 14 drowned out the other risk-taking constituencies. As movement voices, the senate Dems presented solutions in terms of legislative compromise and electoral strategy. While we credit them for there timely move, for all the above reasons the flight of the 14—ie, the insertion of themselves into the movement—in hindsight represents a structural *moderation* from within the movement.

This was confirmed when some of the returning 14 spoke to 150,000-plus who gathered around the Capital for a huge rally on Saturday, March 12. They spoke almost exclusively of the movement as an electoral effort, and neglected to credit the chain of escalations that made their own move possible. This was true, too, for Rev. Jesse Jackson on that day, and at rallies in Madison and Milwaukee. Leaders of the largest unions, WEAC President Mary Bell and AFSCME Council 24's Marty Beil, also called for the ballot box, never once mentioning that organized labor has the ultimate weapon: work stoppage. The majority of the crowd, effectively administered a dose of moderation, headed down State Street after the celebrities of the movement, the Wisconsin 14, spoke. For us, the lesson of the day was, the movement grassroots would do well by refraining from over-valorizing the 14. And we would do better by reflecting on the actions of fellow workers and global citizens in Egypt who inspired us during the first week—the ones who peacefully toppled a thirty-year autocrat partly thanks to a general strike. The questions of the day, for all but especially for the union rank-and-file were, does labor leadership actually represent the best interest of the working class? And why are we only organizing against Walker and the Republicans? Why not pressure the Democrats and labor leaders just as hard?

Grass Roots: Activists rally to keep housing from going to M&I Bank

PAT SCHNEIDER | The Capital Times | pschneider@madison.com | Posted: Saturday, April 9, 2011 9:45 am

Take Back the Land is at it again.

The radical anti-homelessness group rallied Friday at a west-side duplex marked for foreclosure to protest the role of corporate banks in seizing housing while people go homeless.

About 20 protestors from Take Back the Land-Madison and allied local groups unfurled a banner with the group's call to action: "Housing is a Human Right" at a Hammersley Road duplex nearing the end of its journey through a foreclosure action brought by M&I Bank.

"The banks got a huge bailout and are raking in more crumbs," said John Peck, director of Family Farm Defenders. "People shouldn't have to worry about being thrown out on the street because some bankster needs a bigger bonus."

Tenants of the Hammersley Road duplex likely would be forced out on April 26, when a hearing in Dane County Circuit Court is scheduled to confirm the sale of the property.

Take Back the Land is demanding that the property be turned over to the Madison Area Community Land Trust for use as affordable housing.

A spokesperson for M&I Bank declined comment on the case. Asked about the bank's foreclosure policies, she replied in an email: " M&I will work with customers who agree to work in good faith to reach a successful repayment agreement and are in good account standing."

Take Back the Land-Madison last spring drew a load of media attention - and public criticism - when it orchestrated the move of squatters into a west-side duplex vacated by foreclosure.

Monica Adams of Freedom Inc. spoke Friday to the queasy reaction to Take Back the Land tactics by observers who say they support its goals. She likened the action of banks in foreclosure proceedings to a store clerk taking the money plunked down on the counter for a can of soda, then taking the money *and* the soda. Take Back the Land is saying: "Give me my soda," she concluded.

"Give me my house!" shouted the crowd.

Wisconsin-based M&I is under fire on several fronts. Its branch on the Capitol Square was forced to closely briefly last month when customers staged mass withdrawals to protest campaign contributions by bank executives to Gov. Scott Walker. And even though M&I still owes the government $1.7 billion in bail-out money, the bank's executives stand to pocket $71 million in parting bonuses when the sale of the bank corporation to the Bank of Montreal closes later this year.

Kabzuag Vaj of Freedom Inc. says the owners of the Hammersley Road property, Shwaw and Mee Vang, tried unsuccessfully to renegotiate their loan with M&I and support the transfer of the property to the land trust. The Vangs were not available for comment.

Their tenant, Robert McGee, says this will be the second time he has to find a new place to live because the loan on the place he was renting was foreclosed. "It is time for us to stand up to these bailed out banks for their irresponsibility, and disregard for peoples homes and peoples lives," he said.

Rev. Chris Long called on local citizens to take a moral stand on foreclosures, and M&I too. "We're asking the folks at M&I to come to the table in conscience."

Additional community partners in the protest include Groundwork, Liberty Tree, Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice, Madison Info-Shop and Madison Branch of Solidarity.

They plan to rally in protest at the final hearing on the foreclosure at 8 a.m. April 26, Dane County Courthouse, 215 S. Hamilton.

Boycott Koch Industries!

ZOMBIE WALK AGAINST GOVERNOR WALKER

SATURDAY, APRIL 2ND

1:00PM -11:30PM

WISCONSIN STATE CAPITOL

Autonomous Solidarity Organization

Pro-Worker, Pro-Community, Pro-Realization of the American Dream

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, April 21st 2011

Shred, Baby, Shred

Madison, WI – On Friday April 22nd, Earth Day, the Autonomous Solidarity Organization (ASO) is offering to assist Scott Walker with some tedious office work during their lunch hour from Noon to 1:00pm. We recognize that he and Assembly Republicans are very busy working to weaken Wisconsin's middle-class. Tomorrow between 10:00 AM and 3:00 PM, Access Information Management is offering free shredding at 2538 Daniels St. to give Wisconsinites an opportunity to rid themselves of their frivolous, unimportant, and outdated documents. We will be doing our fair share to help recycle these unnecessary documents so that our fellow workers in the Capitol are not overburdened with this task all to themselves.

We volunteer our services to Governor Walker and will be shredding Judge Maryann Sumi's restraining order on the violation of Wisconsin's open meetings law, Judge Daniel Moeser's judgment ordering that the state Capitol be open to the public, the union contracts of Wisconsin's workers, and the pesky Wisconsin State Constitution. We also plan to assist Representative Paul Ryan by shredding the Medicare cards of elderly Wisconsinites, which will no longer be needed under Representative Ryan's so-called "Path to Prosperity." Media and citizens are free to join us and bring along any documents they think the Walker administration believes we Wisconsinites can live without.

Autonomous Solidarity Organization
http://asolidarity.org

Wisconsin's Lost Strike Moment 4/21/11

By: Dan S. Wang and Nicolas Lampert

Two months into the Wisconsin Uprising a movement still exists, but where it goes from here is unclear. The so-called Budget Repair Bill that will end collective bargaining rights for most public employees in Wisconsin is currently tied up in the courts. Legal challenges will likely go on for several months, maybe longer. In the meantime, risks, challenges, and contradictions loom within a movement that can be described as painfully moderate. Wisconsin citizens have arisen and protested in massive numbers. The sleeping giant that is the labor movement + working class solidarity has awoken. But the outlook is not entirely optimistic.

The Wisconsin Uprising has reflected the strengths and weaknesses of the organized labor movement. It has organized huge numbers of people and demonstrated the collective power of public and private unions to combat Walker, the GOP, and corporate greed. But it has also become sadly reflective of the labor movement's leaders—cautious, allergic to direct action and civil disobedience, and most of all, adverse to calling a strike. Labor leadership has instead curtailed a movement that had real potential to defeat Walker and real potential to demand and create a more just and equal society, and transformed it into a movement that has become all about protest marches, recall efforts, and votes for Democrats. But before one screams, "These tactics were necessary! Labor could ill afford turning public opinion against them with a strike!" ask yourself, when has labor won a significant victory without calling a strike? And when has a social justice movement won significant demands without the one-two punch of electoral politics *combined* with civil disobedience and actions that led to mass arrests? And lastly, for those still not convinced, if voting for Democrats is the panacea to all our problems, why were so many of us living in economic stress in Wisconsin *already long before the uprising* with little to no hope that our situation would improve?

To critique a movement that started with such promise and then rapidly devolved, we offer this brief appraisal of what we've seen thus far and what we hope to see develop. For the purposes of this analysis, we can talk about four key moments/storylines, in the overlapping order that they happened.

The first week.
The flight of the 14 senate Democrats.
The events and non-events of March 9/10.
The April 5 election and aftermath.

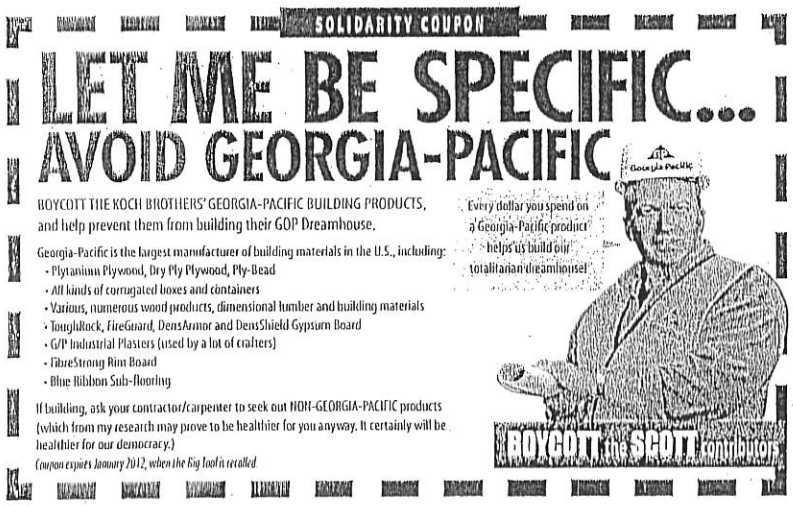
1. In terms of outrage and energy turning into the mass mobilization that persists two months later, the narrative of the first week remains of primary importance. Recall the rapidly developing chain of linked events. The active opposition to Governor Scott Walker and the GOP agenda went from a small, mostly student-led protest on Monday, February 14, to sustained demonstrations of 12k and 30k only days later, capped in its first phase by a day long rally of 70k people on the first Saturday.

In that short time there were sizable public school student walk-outs, firefighters and police marching in solidarity with workers, a three-day teacher sick-out (essentially a non-picket strike) in Madison, and a successful effort to clog the public hearings that in turn triggered a spontaneous occupation of the Capitol lasting nearly two weeks. In the first week, each act of unexpected militancy on the part of one constituency pushed all other constituencies toward taking their own risks. This was the moment of a collective, leaderless, and organic constitution of a social movement, its evolution measured in hours, not days. For those who were in Madison at any point in those first seven days or so, it was *exhilarating*.

IT IS TIME TO PULL BACK THE CURTAIN ON WHO'S BEHIND SCOTT WALKER!

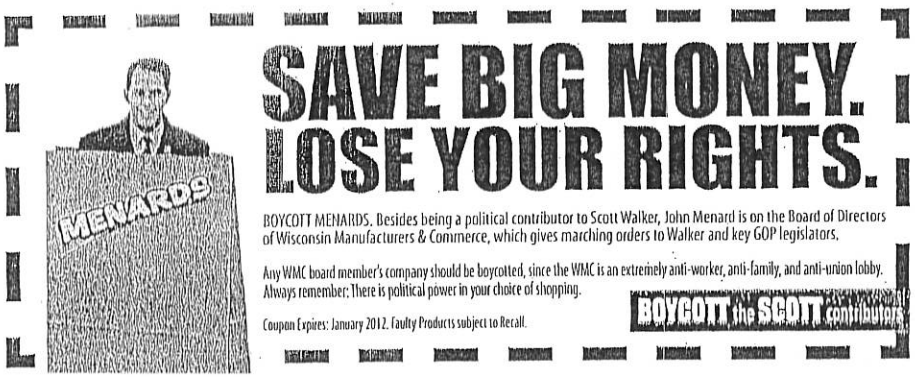
Mon., March 21st *Behind Curtain #1 – Georgia Pacific*

Mon is recycling day in Maple Bluff, and in light of Gov. Walker's proposal to eliminate state recycling requirements and state taxpayer support for local recycling programs, citizens are taking advantage of their last chance to dispose of paper, plastic, glass, and metal in a responsible manner with a drop off at the governor's mansion (99 Cambridge Rd. in Maple Bluff) beginning at 7:00 am. Not surprisingly, one of Gov. Walker's major corporate donors, the Koch Brothers, spent $21 billion to acquire Georgia Pacific, the nation's largest paper company, a massive peddler of throwaway products, and global climate change denier. Volunteers will also be on hand to provide citizens a list of Georgia Pacific products to avoid at the store.


SOLIDARITY COUPON
LET ME BE SPECIFIC...
AVOID GEORGIA-PACIFIC
BOYCOTT THE KOCH BROTHERS' GEORGIA-PACIFIC BUILDING PRODUCTS, and help prevent them from building their GOP Dreamhouse.
Georgia-Pacific is the largest manufacturer of building materials in the U.S., including:
• Plytanium Plywood, Dry Ply Plywood, Ply-Bead
• All kinds of corrugated boxes and containers
• Various, numerous wood products, dimensional lumber and building materials
• ToughRock, FireGuard, DensArmor and DensShield Gypsum Board
• G/P Industrial Plasters (used by a lot of crafters)
• FibreStrong Rim Board
• Blue Ribbon Sub-flooring
If building, ask your contractor/carpenter to seek out NON-GEORGIA-PACIFIC products (which from my research may prove to be healthier for you anyway. It certainly will be healthier for our democracy.)
Coupon expires January 2012, when the Big Tool is recalled
Every dollar you spend on a Georgia-Pacific product helps us build our totalitarian dreamhouse!
Georgia Pacific
BOYCOTT the SCOTT contributors

Tues., March 22nd *Behind Curtain #2 – Menards*

At 4:30 pm on Tuesday, picketers will show up at Menards off Mineral Point RD (430 Commerce Dr) to encourage people to boycott the bigbox retailer. John Menard Jr., the retail kingpin, happens to be Wisconsin's richest person – with a net worth of $5.2 billion in 2010 according to Forbes magazine. Mr. Menard is also a staunch Walker supporter and does double duty as the treasurer for Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC)


MENARDS
SAVE BIG MONEY.
LOSE YOUR RIGHTS.
BOYCOTT MENARDS. Besides being a political contributor to Scott Walker, John Menard is on the Board of Directors of Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce, which gives marching orders to Walker and key GOP legislators.
Any WMC board member's company should be boycotted, since the WMC is an extremely anti-worker, anti-family, and anti-union lobby. Always remember: There is political power in your choice of shopping.
Coupon Expires: January 2012. Faulty Products subject to Recall.
BOYCOTT the SCOTT contributors

Criminalization of Immigration

(www.laluchasigueysigue.wordpress.com)

The following is an article written by one of my former high school students detailing her family's recent experience dealing with the U.S. immigration system. She originally wrote this article for a proposed one-issue leftwing publication that never got off the ground. I present her article here for anyone who wants to really understand the immigration system from the perspective of the immigrant community. Following the article are a few of my own comments.

Immigration Injustice

I was born in the U.S but my parents and many members of my family have been undocumented, what the racist society calls "illegal immigrants." I am about to graduate from high school in Milwaukee and my parents both live in Guatemala because they cannot live here legally. My aunts and uncles also came to this country from Guatemala to accomplish the American Dream. For them this meant to have a better life and work to help their families.

My family recently experienced a crisis with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and my uncle got deported. He lived in this country for 22 years. He got married and had 4 kids. All the kids are ten years old and younger, and all of them are U.S. citizens. Their baby daughter is less than a year old. My uncle supported my Grandma in Guatemala for 21 years by sending her money so she did not have to work. He originally had a work permit and he was applying for Political Asylum but it was denied. He appealed but that was denied too.

So he decided to ask for 3 months to get all his family ready to leave to Guatemala. His lawyer advised him to go to Chicago to the Immigration and Homeland Security Office and to ask for his voluntary deportation. He didn't think he was going to get arrested. His lawyer didn't tell him this was going to happen. Arresting him didn't make any sense because he was volunteering to leave. He was asking for time so he could get all his kids their passports.

He was taken to the Kenosha County Detention Center, a prison not only for immigration detainees but for people accused of other crimes. He was there for 2 weeks and I went to visit him. It was really shocking to see him in jail. We were limited to thirty minutes of visiting time, and had to see him behind glass and talk to him through a phone. His facial expression spoke for itself. He was scared of being there for a long time and without seeing his family.

They were treating him like a criminal, and they were treating us like garbage. We knew nothing about what was going to happen to him. They wouldn't return our phone calls. We didn't know when he was going to get deported, or where in Guatemala he would be sent. Suddenly he was moved to Texas. He was there for another 2 weeks before he was deported, this time with no visits.

My cousins suffered a lot in his absence. They missed him a lot and did not understand what was happening. Then his wife had to go back to Guatemala with all the children. The children had never been to Guatemala and they did not want to go. In Guatemala the kids started school but they couldn't go back to their actual grade because they can't read and write spanish.

Looking at their situation my other aunt doesn't want to go back even though her immigration status in not so good. And she has children too that are U.S. citizens. So she has a deportation order and no lawyer wants to take her case. I don't know why ICE treats immigrants like criminals. For me no human being is illegal. I want to ask Americans, congressmen, and the president, why can't there be immigration reform? Why can't there be a solution to this big problem that treats people with dignity?

Now I realize how privileged I am for being born in the U.S. so I am trying to do something for "mi gente" who do not have papers. I am participating in Voces de la Frontera and Youth Empowered in the Struggle activities, and fighting for change.

The writer is a recent Milwaukee high school graduate involved in Youth Empowered in the Struggle (YES), a youth organization sponsored by Voces de la Frontera.

Editor's comments:

In the fall of 2010 one of my students approached me with a serious problem. Her uncle, a U.S. resident of twenty years, had been arrested and was being held for deportation. The first problem was that nobody knew where he was being held. He had been arrested in Chicago, but had been transferred out of the city. Although he had been able to make at least one phone call, he wasn't really able to explain to the family where he was. All they had was an A-number, an identifying number that all immigration detainees are given upon entrance into the system.

The first thing we did was go to the ICE website and search for his location using his A-number. He was being held in the Kenosha County Detention Center, about an hour by car from Milwaukee. Unfortunately the website did not tell us any information about the time-line of his deportation proceedings. He had indicated on the phone that he had heard that they would transfer him soon to another location, but he did not know when or where that would be. The ICE website was of no help on that account, but it did list contact information for an ICE agent that was in charge of the case.

Over the course of the next couple weeks I continuously called that number to no avail. This agent never once answered his phone, and despite countless messages detailing my interest in the case and my contact information, he never once tried to call me back. I shouldn't have been surprised. I guess it just seems emblematic of the way ICE and the US government in general treat undocumented immigrants and their families, as well as the immigrant community in general.

At least we knew he was in Kenosha for the time being. With that information we decided to pay him a visit. Although many friends and family members were concerned about his safety and well being, and wanted to be there to support him, fear kept most family members away. Many were too terrified to visit because they were undocumented themselves, yet others with legal status were also either too scared or too indifferent to help, and so most family friends refused to help.

It was decided that since my student was a U.S. citizen and was fluent in English she would be the best one to visit the jail. I went along both to drive and also to give moral support. My student's aunt also came with, but stayed in the car with her infant daughter out of fear of being caught. How tragic that must have been to know that your spouse is locked up just a few hundred yards away, and yet to know that to visit is to risk everything.

This whole experience was certainly an eye-opening experience for both my student and I. Visiting the prison in Kenosha really drove home the point that we have a system that treats immigrants like criminals and terrorists. Her uncle was a good man who was only in this country because he wanted to provide a better future for his family. Yet here he was, someone willing and wanting to go back to Guatemala now that his legal status had run out, and the federal government was wasting all these resources to put him in jail. It didn't make any sense.

The scene inside the prison was grim. The place was packed, likely due to the fact that visiting hours were extremely limited. After waiting in the lobby with other families we finally got to go in and see him. He looked distraught. He tried to give some advice to be passed on to his wife since she would eventually be tasked with moving the entire family on her own. He also asked for some money so he could get some clean underwear and socks, since none of these things had been provided to him and he only had on him what he was wearing. The half-hour seemed to fly by and then the visit was over.

Making a Statement With Our Tractors – If Wisconsin's public-sector workers lose their collective bargaining rights, then dairy farmers will lose as well

By: Joel Greeno, Vice President of Family Farm Defenders, dairy farmer Kendall, WI

Madison, Wisconsin is truly an amazing scene of beauty — as well as unprecedented political mobilization. Among the throngs of demonstrators, you'll find Democrats, Republicans, independents, progressives, libertarians, and socialists walking together, discussing real solutions while sowing the seeds of solidarity.

I've traveled from France to Malawi to stand with peasants, farmers, and farm workers, but leading the March 12 tractorcade to Madison was one of the most inspiring things I've ever done. Riding to Madison's Capitol Square required a daylong commitment from the 51 farmers on their tractors of every size, color, and make — along with a few manure spreaders, a fire truck, and a self-propelled combine for effect.

I don't know when I've ever felt as welcome as the moment when our tractors drove through the crowd of 100,000-plus people waving caps and flags, yelling, "Thanks for being here, farmers!" The energy and spirit of camaraderie were overwhelming.

This wasn't just about standing up for collective bargaining rights — it also proved that public and private sector workers will stand together to build a sustainable community. Governor Scott Walker's attack on workers' rights will harm rural schools, communities, and churches. Rural communities, like my town of Kendall, Wisconsin, are the true source of this country's wealth. The fate of these communities is tied intricately to the fate of workers everywhere.

Wisconsin is a dairy state — one in five Wisconsinites is employed by the dairy industry — whether that's on a farm, in a cheese factory, at a farm equipment dealership, or driving a milk truck. Today, 80 percent of our dairy farmers sell their milk through cooperatives, which use collective bargaining to establish milk prices for their members.

As it is, dairy farmers are losing money because their cooperatives aren't standing up to the processors buying their milk, such as Kraft and Schreiber Foods. If public-sector workers lose their collective bargaining rights, then we co-op farmers will lose our rights too. We'll be paid even less for our milk. That's bad for Wisconsin, and it's bad for the poor, the elderly, the sick, women and children, and farmers everywhere.

In many industries, workers don't have collective bargaining rights, so they can't demand fair wages. However, since 1938 the Fair Labor Standards Act has guaranteed almost all Americans a minimum wage, time-and-a-half for overtime in certain jobs, along with child labor restrictions that help give kids a fair shot at getting a decent education.

Corporations, and now governments, are chipping away at these rights and protections. Can this really be happening in the United States? Without fair wages and safe working conditions, what have we accomplished as a nation in the past 200 years?

Classified ads in a recent issue of *Agri-View*, a Wisconsin farm journal, listed 21 farms for sale, with dairy herds ranging from 20 to 180 cows or goats. It's nothing new: nationwide, the consolidation of dairy farms is dramatic. More than half of them disappeared between 1992, when we had 131,509, and 2010, when only 53,127 were left.

When those 21 farms are sold, at least 21 families will move somewhere else, leaving fewer farmers supporting local businesses and the tax base that funds community schools and infrastructure. As the tax base shrinks, school districts eliminate programs and local businesses close, leaving even fewer places for people to work and to buy goods. Is this really good for America or its bottom line?

State governments need to realize that they're not just hurting civil servants when they eliminate bargaining rights, but everyone: family farmers, fishermen, and farmworkers — the people who provide our food — as well as the communities in which these people live and pay taxes. It's time for all of us to stand together, raise our voices, and demand our rights. The strength of our families, our communities, and our nation depends on it.

Attention Fox News: Palm Trees Don't Grow in Wisconsin

March 2, 2011 by Jacob Wheeler www.theuptake.org

On Monday, Fox News' "the O'Reilly Factor" broadcast a segment about the workers' rights demonstrations in Madison, Wisconsin, that used a level of paranoia and falsities seemingly inspired by the John Birch Society. O'Reilly asked correspondent Mike Tobin if the protesters were "professional leftists" or just normal people. Fox News then played b-roll of a demonstration getting ugly — that clearly wasn't a demonstration in Wisconsin. How do we know? There were palm trees in the background. Note to Fox: Palm trees don't grow in Wisconsin.

Best of all, Fox used classic Orwellian language to defend its use of the palm-tree b-roll: The network claimed on www.Mediaite.com that "O'Reilly clearly identified the videos as collectively coming from 'all over the country' (and not Wisconsin)." Reporter Mike Tobin also lied that he was punched by a protester on Friday. The truth is he was merely patted on the shoulder. See for yourself. "Fair and Balanced" yeah right.

PULL TOGETHER

SUPPORT WORKING FAMILIES

March 12, 2011

FARMER-LABOR TRACTORCADE

U.T.I.
Solidaridad!
El Ataque a Uno es el Ataque a todos!
Con la excusa de la recesion económica, los políticos han tratado de poner el peso de la crisis en los hombros de los trabajadores. Ellos van tras los sindicatos, porque nuestra fuerza en números es una amenaza para sus intereses. Esta estrategia de "divide y vencerás" es la misma táctica que han utilizado contra los trabajadores inmigrantes desde hace años.
¿Qué sigue en el orden del día de los Republicanos? "Abierto para negocios y cerrado para las Familias Trabajadoras!" Ellos planean introducir una nueva ley al estilos de Arizona que obligaría a la policía local detener a los inmigrantes por tan sólo "mirarse" indocumentados! Tenemos que parar los planes de explotación y totalitarios de Walker.
No nos dejaremos engañar con sus tacticas divisivas
NO a los ataques a los sindicatos, los empleados públicos y a los servicios sociales !
NO a las leyes racistas y anti-inmigrante!
www.uniondetrabajadores.org
Todos los trabajadores unidos!
El ataque a uno es el ataque a todos!
Por una huelga general: Si Cerraron nuestros sindicatos, Vamos a cerrar su ESTADO!

Before leaving my student deposited $50 into his account via an electronic machine outside of the visiting area. We thought everything worked, until the next time we visited he said he never received the money. When we asked the prison guards they told us that he DID receive it, but that he must not understand how to access the money. They do NOT volunteer to help us further, nor did they volunteer to help show him how to use the system. Instead we are left with no recourse but to accept the loss of $50.

Well you've heard the rest of the story already. We made a couple more visits before he was transferred without notice. The family did end up driving back to Guatemala, and I really feel sorry for the mom who had to drive four kids across three countries all by herself simply because we are governed by a racist system.

And I ask myself, why the hell were they put through all of the indignity, hassle, fear, and heartache, when they were all planning on leaving anyway!?!? It logically does not make any sense. Not to mention the cost to the state of putting him through all of this! What was his crime? When was his trial? The whole system is clearly designed to criminalize immigration, to punish undocumented immigrants without having any due process, trials, etc., and to strike fear in the hearts of immigrant communities.

Basically the whole experience helped to illustrate the assumptions upon which our immigration system is built. Immigrants are assumed to be illegal. Undocumented immigrants are assumed to be criminals. And criminals of course are assumed to be of lesser value and therefore we are supposed to feel no empathy for "detainees."

Wisconsin Protesters Erect 'Walkerville' Tent City To Protest Scott Walker's Budget Cuts

Amanda Terkel, Huffington Post, 06/ 5/11 06:38 PM ET

WASHINGTON -- In February and March, thousands of protesters flooded the Wisconsin Capitol, sleeping in the building overnight and filling the dome with their chants to bring attention to Gov. Scott Walker's (R) attempt to strip public employees of their collective bargaining rights. Now, some of those same individuals are taking the fight to the grounds around the Capitol, erecting a tent city to pay witness to the legislature's budget negotiations.

"It's pretty tough for these politicians to ignore us when we're right there," said Peter Rickman, a Univ. of WI-Madison law student and Teaching Assistants' Association member who is helping to organize the event. "It is a galvanizing, symbolic action of working folks standing up and saying enough is enough."

Rickman told The Huffington Post there were around 100 tents set up Saturday night around the Capitol in downtown Madison. The tent city is being called "Walkerville," reminiscent of the "Hooverville" shanty towns set up by homeless Americans during the Great Depression.

Organizers have a permit to stay there until June 20. The intent, however, is to remain as long as as the budget negotiations are going on inside the Capitol.

THE RANK AND FILE WORKERS OF

SCFL and IWW

call for a nation wide PUBLIC AND PRIVATE sector

GENERAL STRIKE

The following motions were passed by the SCFL:

Motion 1: **"The SCFL endorses a statewide general strike, possibly for the day Walker signs his "Budget Repair Bill," and requests the Education Committee immediately begin educating affiliates and members on the organization and function of a general strike."**

Motion 2: **"The SCFL goes on record as opposing all cuts contained in Walkers "Budget Repair Bill," including, but not limited to, curtailed bargaining rights and reduced wages, benefits, pensions, funding for public education and Medicare."**

Please pass supporting motions in your council and organize committees to prepare for the strike!

www.SCFL.org **www.iww.org**

Message of solidarity with the workers in Wisconsin, from Iranian workers / پیام همبستگی کارگران ایران با کارگران مبارز آمریکا

Written by Saeed Valadbaygi Editor's Choice 1389 ,23 اسفند 3/14/11

American Workers,

We have heard the sounds of your protests against the brazen attack on your rights, imposed on you by the capitalist system. Wisconsin Governor's plan is only one of the latest attacks that, along with all the other attacks, have been conducted against you, our fellow class sisters and brothers

Wisconsin Prisons: What are Gov. Walker's Plans?

By: Anonymous

First of all, Walker's bill adds 35 unclassified division administrator positions to various agencies, three to the Department of Corrections. Unclassified civil servants are not required to satisfy the merit and fitness requirements applicable to the classified service. Unclassified employees serve at the pleasure of the employer and are generally paid more than classified civil servants. This opens the door for blatant cronyism and a method by which Walker will be able to implement policies not intended by Wisconsin lawmakers.

Secondly, Gov. Walker's budget for prisons decreases the levels of funding from $1.3 billion to $1.2 billion in 2012. At the same time, he plans to repeal the recently enacted early release program, which would have saved mammoth costs by reducing sentences for eligible prisoners by 15-33 percent. Additionally, studies have shown that early release reduces recidivism –future costs– while maintaining public safety.

Incarcerating people costs a lot of money. Keeping an offender in prison costs $90 a day, probation only costs about $8 a day. Thus, the cost of caging Wisconsin's 22,000+ prisoners adds up to almost $700 million a year.

How do you reconcile Walker's contradictory agenda to decrease funding to prisons, but impose policies that require more funding? Logic would have it that the budgetary short falls would then have to be made internally.

Some possibilities. First, those more likely to be implemented by the reactionary forces now in control:

a. Stagnate the wages of prison guards and staff.
Walker could do this; he's already eroded collective bargaining for state and public employees, so why not squeeze these workers a bit more?

b. Privatize prisons.
For years, studies have grappled over whether private prisons are more cost-effective. Results are conflicting. That aside, in 1999, Walker, then a state representative and chairman of the Assembly Corrections Committee, introduced a bill to transfer the power to organize punishment from the state to private corporations whose fundamental purpose is to make money for stockholders. Walker also introduced a bill to import prisoners from other states, a rent-a-cell practice that would generates revenue for the state and, when engaging the private prison industry in the construction and maintenance of prisons, enhances profits for investors on Wall Street.

c. Feed prisoners less.
State Rep. Mark Radcliff, D-Black River Falls, thought this was a great idea: feed prisoners just 2 meals a day. He figured we could save $5 million annually. The current cost to feed a prisoner, about $1.00 a day must have struck him as too generous.

d. Double or triple bunk prisoners.
WI prisons are already at 120% occupancy and overcrowding creates unsafe conditions for both guards and prisoners, but they do it in Arizona and it saves money, so why not Wisconsin?

e. Exploit more prison labor.
Follow the lead of Republican Senator Ron Johnson, the supposed "pulled-up-by-his-own-bootstraps" guy. He saves tens of thousands of dollars every year by employing prisoners at his plastics factories whose health care costs are paid for by the state. And follow the lead of other 37 other states that have legalized the contracting of prison labor by private corporations. For the tycoons who have invested in the prison industry, it's been like finding a pot of gold. They don't have to worry about unions, strikes, pensions, or paying unemployment or health insurance. All of their workers are full-time, never arrive late and never go on vacation.

FROM THE INFORMATION STATION:

3pm, Saturday, February 26, 2011

As many of you are aware, the capitol police have issued statements that they intend to take the following actions:

-ONLY BACKPACKS are allowed in the building

-Large quantities of FOOD and WATER are not allowed, pack lightly.

Building entrances will be open: Saturday, February 26, 2011: until 6pm

Sunday, February 27, 2011: 8am-4pm (normal business hours)

Capitol Police have issued an official statement that the building will resume normal business hours on Sunday. We ask for your continued support in solidarity. We are calling for massive public participation on Sunday afternoon; it is important that our voices are heard at the Capitol during this time. It is also vitally important that our protest remain peaceful at all times and that we avoid altercations. During twelve days of peaceful protests, there have only been 9 arrests. This is unprecedented.

"The hottest place in Hell is reserved for those who remain neutral in times of great moral conflict."

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

Join Us In Our Peaceful Protest:

On Sunday, February 27th there will be announcements over the Capitol loudspeakers asking people to leave.

We are encouraging people to remain peaceful and avoid being arrested. Some members of our community intend to remain inside the building beyond 4pm. If you make a personal choice to engage in peaceful civil disobedience, please consult the ACLU "Guide For Demonstrators" (the orange flier) located at the Information Station in the West Wing of the first floor.

Assembly Hearing Slip

(Please print plainly)

Date: 2/26/11

Bill No. SB11

Or Subject:

Bucky Badger

Name

1000 Univ Ave

Street Address or Route Number (optional)

Madison WI 53706

City and ZIP Code

Myself

Representing

Speaking in favor:	☐
Speaking against:	☐
Registering in favor:	☐
Registering against:	☒
Speaking for information only (neither for nor against):	☐

Please promptly return this slip to the messenger at the hearing.

Provided by:
Assembly Sergeant at Arms
411 West, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53708

Now for some possibilities that will not be considered:

f. Reinstating the policy of early release.
Doyle's intention to grant early release to 3000 prisoners last year was expected to save as much as $27 million over two years by reducing the length of incarceration for these nonviolent offenders. Note that over ten thousand men and women in Wisconsin, 53% of the total number of prisoners, are incarcerated for non-violent offenses.

g. Offering treatment to the estimated 70% of prisoners who have issues related to addiction and the 31% of prisoners who have mental health issues.
Providing treatment to those suffering from illnesses reduces crime and the costs of incarceration, which would save billions of dollars over a decade.

h. Reducing rampant racism in regard to arrests.
Although African-Americans make up only 6% of Wisconsin's population, they make up 45% of the prison population. Wisconsin leads the nation in racial disparity in sentencing for drug offenses. Blacks in the Badger state are 42 times more likely than whites to be sentenced to prison for drug convictions. By comparison, in Minnesota the ratio is 10 to 1 and in Alabama it is 3 to 1.

On a side note, Minnesota, a state with roughly the same population as WI, approximately 5 million, and the same demographics in crime rates, has 14,000 fewer prisoners. Why? Because over the last decade WI governors have maintained 'tough on crime" attitudes which manifest as "Truth in Sentencing" laws that effectively eliminate parole.

i. Offering alternatives to incarceration.
In lieu of prison, offenders could "do time" in positive pay backs to society through community service projects such as constructing affordable housing or maintaining parks. Programs like this would have the additional benefit of giving offenders skills to make them productive members of their communities.

And finally:

j. Entirely change the orientation of the debate and *challenge the belief that caging and controlling people makes us safe.*
An overwhelming number of studies show that large-scale incarceration does not reduce crime or create more public safety. Walker's prison policies fly in the face of this evidence. However, they are consistent with his "open for business" agenda; they invite investment opportunities for a multi-billion dollar private prison industry -one of the fastest-growing industries in the U.S.- while crowding out financial support to create healthier and safer communities.

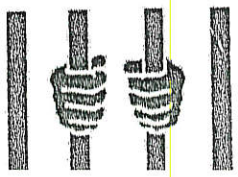
- What would it mean to imagine a society in which prisons and punishment were not allowed to become sources of corporate profit?

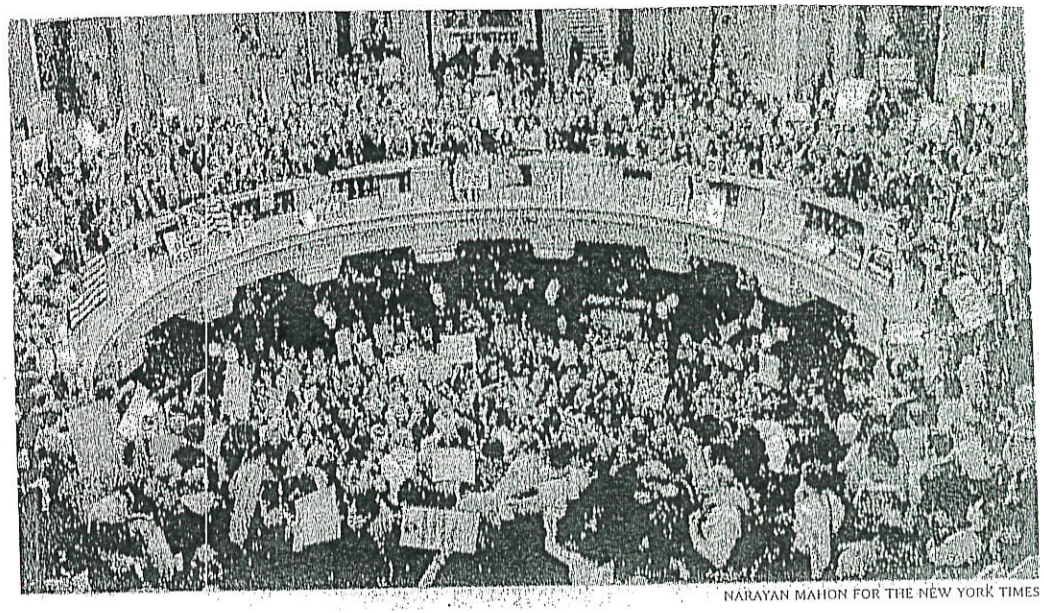
- What would it mean to stop using the poor and disenfranchised to build careers?

- Why do we tolerate a society in which race and class are primary determinants of punishment?

- Could we not deter harm in our communities by addressing the root causes of crime?

- Have we so little insight and moral capacity that we cannot imagine a system of justice based on reparation and reconciliation rather than retribution and vengeance?





NARAYAN MAHON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

ISTHMUS | The Daily Page

Wisconsin protesters turn Capitol into the world's largest commune

by Dean Robbins
on Friday 02/25/2011 8:30 am

I was too young for Woodstock, but now I have the overnight protests inside Wisconsin's Capitol. For the last week, demonstrators have turned the building into the world's largest commune, a combination party and crash pad for those rallying against Gov. Scott Walker's union-curbing budget bill.

At 9 p.m. on Thursday, people stream into the Capitol with sleeping bags – a rainbow coalition of parents with kids, bearded older dudes, college students, and musicians toting instruments. At the moment, drummers are pounding away in the Rotunda while others chant: "Hey hey, ho ho, Scott Walker's got to go!" Substitute "Lyndon Johnson" for "Scott Walker" and you get an immediate 1960s flashback.

In this circus environment, you're not surprised by anything you see. A guy in a devil costume passes by, followed by a guy blowing a huge conch shell, followed by Madison Mayor Dave Cieslewicz. Performance artists lie on the Rotunda floor with big signs saying "SERF." A three-man string band plays a Johnny Cash song while a little girl does a jig. Meanwhile, a middle-school documentary crew, with camera and tripod, roams the corridors, interviewing people camped out for the night.

For all the indignation inside the Capitol – evident in the anti-Scott Walker posters covering the marble walls – the mood among Protest Nation is positive, even utopian. Little kids play in a roped-off corridor, and volunteers serve donated food from a stand on the second floor. Several posters remind everyone that "This Is a Peaceful Protest."

Henri Slocum, a certified EMT from the Twin Cities, is one of the young volunteer medics trying to keep the crowds healthy. They've been passing out Tylenol, performing acupuncture, giving massages, and reminding people to wash their hands. "We're here to provide holistic wellness for everyone, no matter what side you're on," Slocum says. "Scott Walker, if he needs help, we're here to help him."

A teaching assistant from the UW Library Science department looks cozy in her sleeping bag in a ground-floor hallway. She's brought a laptop for studying and grading, along with cheese and sausage sticks "like a good Wisconsin resident."

The T.A. has been protesting Walker's budget bill for 10 days, but this is her first overnight in the Capitol.

"I want to remind the legislators that this is our house," she says.

Tonight, no one could possibly deny that fact.